

ΕΚΚΛΗΣΙΑ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΣ ΠΛΗΡΩΜΑΤΟΣ
Apostolic Church of the Pleroma

YEAR B - NEW YEAR'S DAY

Delivered by Tau Phosphoros
to the Parish of St. Ambelain
on January 1st, 2015

Happy New Year, my brethren. All of our scriptural readings for the day are centered around a single common theme: Initiation into the Light of Gnosis. As Gnostics, we tend to emphasize the life and works of Jesus as our means of salvation rather than His death. But this should not be construed to mean that His death has no significance. Far from it. Our central sacrament, the Eucharist, is a re-enactment of His sacrifice for us. When we say that we do not look to the death of Jesus for salvation, what we mean is that mere blind faith in Jesus' death on the cross is not sufficient for true salvation. Some Gnostics of the past have even gone so far as to disdain the cross since it was the instrument of our Lord's death. But for us the cross is an important part of our symbolism and doctrine.

In our first reading, from the Apocryphon of James, Jesus says, "Remember my cross and my death, and you will live." And he says, "Be seekers of death." It is a well-known maxim that states: "To be initiated is to learn how to die." And that is exactly what this reading is about when it says, "When you search out death, it will teach you about being chosen," and, "No one afraid of death will be saved, for the Kingdom of God belongs to those who put themselves to death." In other words, the Kingdom of God belongs to the Initiates, the mature in Christ, known in the scriptures and to us as the Chosen, or Elect.

And what is this promised Kingdom of God? We can have faith in the words of Jesus who tells us that the Kingdom of God is within. That is, it is not some far off and foreign landscape. It is our true home, our true state of existence. It is this mundane awareness that is alien to us. So, when we read of the "coming down" of the Kingdom, such as is described in our reading from Revelation, we can see this as a literary convention used to describe this transformation of consciousness. It would be equally apt to speak of it as if our consciousness were being raised up - though this too is but a metaphor for the Thing itself.

In our passage from Revelation, the one sitting on the throne - that is, Jesus - says, "Behold, I make all things new." Now, the power of Christ, as shown by the miracles he performed on earth and those performed in our own day in His Name, most certainly has a restorative and regenerative effect on the whole being. But we are not talking about the health of the body alone. It is the restoration of our soul, and of our mind or noetic faculty that resides therein, that truly "makes all things new."

Let us look at this by analogy. Let us say that you want to learn a new language. Not just a different language, but one that uses an utterly foreign script, so that not only are the sounds of this language incomprehensible, but the sight of it conveys nothing more than meaningless lines, curves, and squiggles. As you learn the script and the sounds represented by each character, and the ideas represented by the various groupings of those sounds and characters, the language transforms from something undecipherable and incomprehensible to something alive and meaningful. The language itself, of course, has not changed at all, it is merely our perception and understanding that has changed. So it is with the gnosis of mystical revelation, which does not really change the world around us, but merely reveals the true nature of things, and our own true nature. And it is this supreme self-awareness that constitutes dwelling with the Kingdom of God.